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community

DIVERSITY WORKING IN HARMONY

the newsletter of the american massage therapy association

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MAY • JUN 08

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

In the Mar•Apr issue of Hands On, you were introduced to your new national board of directors. All 12 members of the board and eight other national volunteers traveled to Chicago for national leadership orientation, to learn the things necessary to effectively and responsibly carry out the duties entrusted to us by the members. We then conducted our first board meeting of the new fiscal year. The value of the orientation before the board meeting was evident as we came together to deliberate and vote on a range of topics affecting the direction of your association. You'll find a meeting synopsis in this issue.

One of the most exciting pieces of the March meeting was the World Café discussion held after the meeting. Participants included members of the national board, other national volunteer leaders, chapter volunteer leaders and staff. This continued the discussion started last September in Cincinnati and it will help guide the board in June as we start looking at plans for the next fiscal year. My gratitude goes to those who were able to attend, and I hope this is a forum we'll continue to use. This will serve us not only as we look at plans for the association, but also as we look at the future of the profession.

Part of planning for the future includes our continued collaboration with individuals and organizations in massage therapy, bodywork, integrative medicine and spas. By being a part of a larger community, we are able to increase understanding and enhance our relationships. Having AMTA representation at various forums to discuss workplace opportunities, education, research, legislation, certification and accreditation positions us to better serve our members and have a voice in shaping the future of the massage therapy profession.

I hope this gives you a sense of the many different layers and players that make up AMTA. For me, the real heart of AMTA is the opportunity to have and continue to develop wonderful relationships with so many gifted individuals nationwide. Much of this comes from my experience within the chapter structure.

Within our chapters lie opportunities for networking, service, education and fun at the local level. It is a stepping stone for the work that we are doing at the national level. Volunteering for the North Carolina Chapter and meeting volunteer leaders and members from other chapters have provided me with a wealth of knowledge and skills that are valuable now as I serve as national president. I have found lasting friendships, received business support and been provided a chance to serve others and our profession.

I thank the chapter leaders for all that you do to help build and sustain the body of AMTA, and I encourage everyone to get involved by attending a chapter meeting, volunteering to serve on a committee, voting in chapter and national elections or running for office. Getting involved will give you the opportunity to participate in our future in the same manner in which we are working together within the industry. Together we can make a difference.

Blessings,

MK Brennan

MISSION: To serve AMTA members while advancing the art, science and practice of massage therapy.

Lou Potter (CT) has enjoyed some unique clients who found him through his listing in AMTA's national locator service.

No Matter Where You Are

By JoAnn Milivojevic

"Location, location, location" is the old cliché used to emphasize the value of a piece of hot real estate. The same could be said for the career of massage therapist Lou Potter (CT). Owner and founder of Knead A Massage Clinic, he lives in Stamford, Connecticut, which is a part of the New York City metropolitan area. As such, Stamford has attracted many Fortune 500 businesses, and lately, more and more film crews. When those hardworking crews needed a little hands-on healing, *AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist®* national locator service helped connect Potter with those in need.

One of them was Ron Phillips, a freelance cameraman who has worked on films for years. Turns out, Phillips routinely uses AMTA's locator service when he is on location for a shoot. In Stamford, Potter got the call. "I worked on him several times while he was here," says Potter, "and he also referred me to others who were in town filming."

Those others included Hollywood superstar John Travolta, who was shooting the film "Old Dogs" with Robin Williams, due out next year. Travolta was staying at a beautiful home in the area, but said things were hectic at his place and preferred to have his massage at Potter's home studio. He was a gracious guest and allowed Potter's sons to snap a photo with him.

What's it like to work on a superstar? No different than anyone else, according to Potter. "I work on every kind of person, including runners, pregnant women and paraplegics," he explains. "I approach each case as if it were a new case even if I've seen them 10 times."

Given the high stress of filming on location, Travolta was simply looking for a relaxing massage. And he got just that for two hours under Potter's expert touch.

In business since 1994, Potter is no stranger to working on celebrities. He again credits the Stamford location for helping him garner a diverse client base. One of his jobs is to massage New York Yankees baseball players during their postseason. Several professional athletes have also become Potter's private clients.

While being in Stamford has certainly helped Potter's career, so has 14 years of dedicated hard work. He is listed in local yellow pages and online, but most of his clients come by referrals—and by AMTA's locator service as well.

If you're a Professional Active member and want to be listed in *AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist®* national locator service, just call Member Services toll-free at 877-905-2700, or visit the Members Section of the AMTA website at **www.amtamassage.org/member** and select "Locator enrollment" from the menu on the left.

A HOMEPAGE OF YOUR OWN

AMTA is excited to announce the newest benefit for members: a free trial massage website through The Holistic Alliance!

As an AMTA member, you can now get a beautiful and affordable website for your practice, absolutely free for two weeks. Hundreds of massage therapists are using these websites to attract more clients and boost their referrals.

This is the easiest way for you to use the Internet to grow your practice. You can get your own website—free of charge—with no risk and no commitment for the first two weeks.

Best of all, your free trial website takes only five minutes to build. If you're happy with the website, packages start at $29.95 per month.

AMTA will still continue to offer quality, low-cost websites through their existing web provider, Members Online.

When you sign up with Members Online, the program takes you to a simple question-and-answer format that leads you through the design process. You can create pages to promote your practice, provide potential clients with your biography or sell products. Once your project is submitted to Members Online, you'll be assigned a web design technician to assist you.

Be sure to log in to the Members Section today to determine which provider best suits your needs. Either way, you'll be getting a great looking website at an affordable rate!

>>www.amtamassage.org/member

clockwise from bottom left: Immediate Past President Leena S. Guptha (PA) fastens the president's pin on President M.K. Brennan (NC). • AMTA President-Elect Judy Stahl (AZ) with Immediate Past President Leena S. Guptha (PA) and President M.K. Brennan (NC). • Your 2008-2009 AMTA Board of Directors.

March Board Meeting Notes

The new AMTA Board of Directors began fiscal year (FY) 08/09 at its annual March meeting in Chicago. After taking the oath of office, they set to work considering the issues and motions brought forward for the benefit of AMTA members and the profession.

Chapters

The board allocated additional resources to support chapters in fulfilling new financial reporting requirements that went into effect March 1. The board also agreed that chapters can use the accounting software that makes it easiest for them to provide timely reports.

Based on a review of eligibility requirements, the board also approved a change to the job description for chapter secretaries.

House of Delegates

In response to chapter comments, the board approved changes to clarify the House of Delegates (HOD) delegate job description, especially in the areas of accountability and communications.

The board approved a recommendation from the HOD to modify bylaws to allow chapter nominating committees to submit more than one candidate for chapter officer elections. This change will align the chapter nomination process with the national nomination process.

The board also agreed with the House of Delegates Operational Committee's (HODOC) assessment that there is no need to reaffirm AMTA's professional standards and requirements for its online continuing education offerings, as suggested by one chapter. The board and HODOC agreed that such guidelines are already in effect in AMTA's online learning material and there's no need to repeat them.

The board declined a recommendation to change the bylaws to require chapters to specify when elected chapter officers take office, because the board believes it's best to allow each chapter to decide whether to include this in their standing rules.

Reports

The board received several reports related to the beginning of FY08/09. AMTA's executive director reviewed the FY08/09 areas of strategic focus and annual plans.

The Finance Committee and AMTA staff provided a projected year-end financial report for FY07/08. The Audit Commission also reported on additional efforts that new financial reporting standards will require.

Finally, the board hosted another World Café listening circle, similar to those held during the September 2007 AMTA National Convention. Please see "Café Talk Continues" on page 5 for more details.

Proposed Bylaw Changes

AMTA gives you the opportunity to voice your thoughts on all proposed bylaw changes. Your comments are weighed by the board before any decisions are made. At its June 2008 meeting the board will again consider proposed bylaw changes. To read the proposed changes and offer your comments, log in at **www.amtamassage.org/member/0308bylawnote.html**.

Café Talk Continues

On March 8, 2008, AMTA hosted another World Café dialogue after its board meeting in Chicago. More than 50 people participated in the two-hour discussion, including members of the AMTA Board of Directors, chapter leaders, national volunteer chairs and AMTA staff.

The purpose was to continue dialogues begun at the September 2007 board meeting and AMTA National Convention on the right balance between membership growth and quality. The March discussions centered on defining quality as it relates to massage therapy, massage therapists and AMTA members.

The Café was divided into several phases in which specific questions were asked, discussed and voted on by participants. The primary questions were:

- How would you define a quality massage experience from the consumer's point of view, and was this adequately defined in the September Café?
- What should AMTA requirements be for membership?
- Should AMTA recognize higher levels of professional competency beyond the current entry-level requirements, such as different levels of competency and professional specialties?

The group agreed with all of the characteristics of a quality massage experience defined by the September Café, with the addition of: environment; client safety and confidentiality; client history; ongoing communication with the client; networking and referrals with other types of practitioners; advanced education to address more advanced needs.

Participants were evenly split between leaving current membership requirements as they are and changing them. There was no consensus on how to change AMTA's requirements. Suggestions ranged from requiring compliance with state laws—which AMTA already does—to requiring proof of a higher level of professionalism, such as more hours, months or years of education, college-level credit hours or mentoring. The group was mostly against changing current continuing education requirements for AMTA members.

Discussion on levels of professional competency produced a diverse range of responses, but trended toward a core massage therapy career path. There was general agreement that AMTA should recognize additional levels of competence as part of the core career path, with two or three levels above the current entry level.

However, many felt that other organizations need to take the lead on creating new career paths for massage therapists, because AMTA is not a certifying body. AMTA membership needs to reflect the massage therapy certifications, education programs, accreditation and licensing available through other bodies.

Participants had significant differences of opinion on whether AMTA should recognize and support specialties. The idea of special interest groups as opposed to specialty membership categories was mentioned. These results suggest that this subject needs further research so the next dialogue can be better informed about the different possibilities and their implications for AMTA and the profession.

Additional discussions at the Café centered on the need to define the profession's body of knowledge and understand the massage therapy marketplace before attempting to define or create career paths.

These results represent another step toward defining quality for the profession and AMTA's contribution to it. This will be valuable information for ongoing efforts to define common standards, which could one day lead to overall standards for the quality of education and practice in the profession.

For more on the World Café discussions, please see "World Café," *Hands On* Nov•Dec 2007, page 5, and "Report from the World Café," *Hands On* Jan•Feb 2008, page 3.

>> www.amtamassage.org/member/handsonindex.html

HISTORY: THE FIRST CONVENTION

By Pat Benjamin (IL), PhD

"The More We Get Together" was sung with enthusiasm at the first convention of the American Association of Masseurs and Masseuses* (AAMM) held in Kansas City, Missouri, in August 1946. The gathering lasted for three days and ended with a banquet on Saturday night. Education included Eunice Ingham on reflexology, I. H. Lewis on cradepathy, a presentation on equipment by the Therm-Aire Corporation, and roundtable discussions. A post-convention course on modern massage was taught by John Granger, founder of the Multi-Therapy College. Newly elected president Clark Cottrell of Washington remarked afterwards, "I am sure we are in the right track to the natural methods of healing."

AAMM had 68 members in 1946, and 14 were present at the first convention. Attendees ratified the association's first constitution and bylaws. Officers were elected at the convention itself, a practice that lasted for more than 40 years. President Cottrell laid out his leadership philosophy with his motto—cooperation—calling on members to stand together to advance the organization.

*AMTA was founded as the American Association of Masseurs and Masseuses in Chicago in 1943. The name was changed in 1958 to the American Massage & Therapy Association, and changed again in 1983 to the American Massage Therapy Association.

Marie, Danielle, Lucas and Bernadette are passing on this gift to the world by helping people with their caring hearts and their healing hands. Bancroft is honored to have played a part in their family's physical, emotional and spiritual transformation.

— BANCROFT SCHOOL OF MASSAGE THERAPY

All in the Family

By Robin Weidner

Ten years ago, Marie Arsenault (CT) was a stay-at-home mother focused on raising her children and actively volunteering at a local church. But after a personal setback, Arsenault started looking for professional work–something that would be rewarding for herself and for other people.

Fond of alternative healthcare, Arsenault wondered if massage therapy was a suitable career path for her and her family. It wasn't until many years later that she realized what a match it truly was.

Paving the Way

Arsenault researched schools and talked with massage professionals before finally deciding on Bancroft School of Massage Therapy in Worcester, Massachusetts, for its strong reputation and respected instructors.

Initially unsure if she would be comfortable with the level of intimacy in practicing massage, Arsenault pressed on. Just a few weeks into her program, she began to forge trusting relationships with classmates and teachers.

"It really was a family atmosphere," says Arsenault. "Each teacher was very nurturing as well as being a top-notch instructor. By the time the first year was through, we were all connected and it was a personally healing experience for me."

So healing, in fact, that Arsenault offered to pay for her sister, Bernadette Negron, to attend as well. "I'm so grateful that Bernadette decided to accept my offer," reflects Arsenault. "In many ways, Bancroft changed her life. She began to believe in herself."

Following Close Behind

Meanwhile, Arsenault's daughter, Danielle Curboy (CT), was unsatisfied with her nine-to-five desk job that was competing for time with her children. Seeing how much massage had changed her mother's life, Curboy followed suit and applied to Bancroft, too.

"I loved my time at Bancroft," Curboy confirms. "I actually lost two people who were close to me while I was enrolled. For a while I felt like I couldn't even go to class, but they encouraged me to return and helped me get back on track. It really just ended up being like a big family."

Arsenault's son, Lucas Jaccheo, took a different route into massage. "One of the main reasons I became interested in bodywork was through studying Tai Chi and noticing the change it produced in me. I wanted to learn something that would enable me to bring about positive change in others," says Jaccheo.

When time came to apply to schools, Bancroft was the obvious choice. Jaccheo graduated from Bancroft's accelerated program in November 2007 with a well-rounded understanding of massage, which he incorporates regularly into his Chinese modality of preference, tuina.

New Horizons

Professionally, Arsenault is an active member of the AMTA-Connecticut Chapter, and really enjoys engaging her career in new ways. She's currently a therapist at the Norwich Senior Center, a place she's come to cherish every day.

"I lost my youngest daughter in a car accident," says Arsenault candidly, "but going back to work saved me. I could get out of my own sorrow and begin ministering to other people. Many of my clients have lost children and spouses, and I consider it a privilege to help them release their own emotions through touch."

Curboy also works with elderly patients, including former clients of her mother. She says, "Many of my patients are touch-deprived and often cry on the table. Early in my career, it would physically and emotionally drain me. But I've learned how to listen and not soak up their energy–to have empathy, but to also have my personal boundaries."

Giving to Others … Together

Though she is thankful for her professional success, perhaps most important to Arsenault is the strong bond she's developed with her family. "You can't get into this industry and do well if you don't want to care for people," says Arsenault. "There's an unspoken love between human beings, and what better thing to pass along through massage than love?"

Jaccheo adds, "It's a common interest and language that we all share. The way we look at the world is so similar now."

Massage therapy has truly given Marie Arsenault and her family new skills, new goals and even renewed hope during challenging times–a profession doesn't get much more suitable than that.

The last shift of volunteer massage therapists at the American Cancer Society benefit organized by Cortiva Institute's Wall Township Clinic and the Hand in Hand Massage Network. The organizers welcomed all therapists who could supply proof of liability insurance.

Massage for the Cure

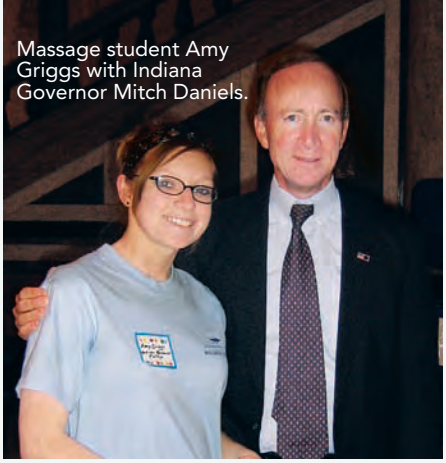
On Saturday, March 15, 2008, volunteer massage therapists offered one-hour massages in a public fundraising event. The massages cost $35, and all proceeds benefited the American Cancer Society. Cortiva Institute's Wall Township Clinic collaborated with the Hand in Hand Massage Network, a professional massage therapist networking group that serves students and graduates of New Jersey-area massage schools, to organize the event.

Kelly Karol, Cortiva Institute's director of career services, says, "We raised $4,081 for the American Cancer Society in a single day! This was Cortiva's first massage event fundraiser in New Jersey and it was a huge success. It gave our students an exciting opportunity to earn externship hours, and ... a chance to give back to the community."

Lori Keith (NJ), CMT, founder of Hand in Hand, says, "For three years, Hand in Hand has been involved in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life at Ocean County College. I wanted to hold an event prior to the relay that would raise money for this great cause. I was delighted when Kelly Karol and the staff at Cortiva welcomed the idea and opened their doors and their hearts for our mission!"

"To see a group come together to work with camaraderie and no rivalry at all, was just so inspiring," adds Keith. "I hope we can do it again next year."

Keith is a Professional member of AMTA and has served on the board of directors of AMTA-New Jersey Chapter. Hand in Hand welcomes all massage students and professionals. Visit **www.handinhandnetwork.net** for more information.



Massage student Amy Griggs with Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels.

Hoosier Hands

By Jennie Irving (IN)

Indiana celebrated 13 years of Indiana Massage Therapy Awareness Week (MTAW) February 3–8, 2008. Governor Mitch Daniels signed a proclamation recognizing the benefits of massage and the American Massage Therapy Association. Professional therapists from all over Indiana and students from the Indiana Business College and Northern Lights School volunteered to provide 521 chair massages at the state capitol.

AMTA-Indiana Chapter encourages attending therapists to meet their legislators, and explains how bills are passed in Indiana. In 2007, after more than a decade of trying, Indiana became the 38th state to regulate massage therapy.

Chapter president Jennie Irving says, "We were jokingly told last year that legislators were concerned that if they passed the regulation, we may not come back to offer the chair massages! But, this has become a tradition we all enjoy in our legislative session. There is no doubt that this has also been an excellent educational opportunity and a fantastic gesture of good will."

Dance Craze

By Walter Selens (ME)

Walter Selens (ME) with "Slugger," mascot for the Portland Seadogs baseball team, at the STRIVE Dance-a-thon. >>

On March 1 and 2, 2008, members of AMTA-Maine Chapter's newly formed public relations team volunteered for the fourth annual STRIVE Dance-a-thon in Portland, Maine. Walter Selens, Shirley Joy-Smith (ME) and Carolyn Ehringhaus (ME) worked for 12 hours and provided 78 massages at the overnight event.

STRIVE is an organization that creates fun and educational events for young adults with mental retardation. The Dance-a-thon featured high school students competing in endurance and fundraising skills. Four rock bands, DJs, dance teachers and massage therapists enjoyed a very loud but profitable night at the event, which raised more than $30,000 for STRIVE.

Focus on the Profession: The Future of Massage Therapy

A year ago we launched a series of articles that explore the cornerstones of the profession: accreditation, certification, licensure and research. The profession is at an important stage in its development and these articles explain how each cornerstone impacts the future success of massage therapy.

As this series comes to a close, we explore where we are today, where we want to go, what we're doing to get there and how you can help.

Improving Education through Accreditation

AMTA supports high educational standards for all massage therapy students. Our vision for the future is that there will be accreditation of all massage therapy institutions and programs by a United States Department of Education-recognized agency specializing in massage therapy education standards.

This is important to the profession because it assures and improves the consistency of massage education for those entering the profession by creating a way to assess quality. It also helps consumers identify competent practitioners. In a 2006 AMTA member survey, 90 percent of respondents agreed that all massage schools should be accredited, and 94 percent said consumers have a right to expect that all massage therapists have consistent basic training and skills. Only 9 percent felt most massage therapists were adequately trained to practice.

Currently, accreditation for massage therapy programs or institutions is voluntary. Of the approximately 1,500 massage therapy schools in the United States, slightly more than 300 schools and programs are accredited.

AMTA's Council of Schools (COS) is working to educate massage therapy schools and programs about the benefits of accreditation for students and the profession. In the coming years, the COS will also look at the similarities and differences between the various accrediting agencies in an effort to move all schools toward accreditation.

AMTA also is encouraging research literacy in massage schools. Research literacy means massage therapists know where to find the latest massage therapy information, how to read and interpret studies, and how to implement changes based on research findings. Finally, through its involvement with the Academic Consortium for Complementary and Alternative Health Care, AMTA is creating educational materials for medical schools to enhance the partnership between massage therapy and the medical community.

To learn more about accreditation or how a school can become accredited, contact the U.S. Department of Education at **www.ed.gov** or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation at **www.chea.org** or 202-955-6126. A list of accredited schools can be found through both of these organizations as well.

Demonstrating Standards through Certification

AMTA supports certification that reflects a demonstration of professional competency and is committed to the importance of continuing education to maintain it. In our survey, 94 percent of Professional members agreed that consumers have the right to expect that massage therapists have consistent training and skills. In fact, 62 percent agreed that all massage therapists should be nationally certified.

Certification is a way for professionals to demonstrate their high standards of achievement and continued competence to consumers. Massage therapists can be nationally certified by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) by successfully completing the certification process and renewing it periodically through continuing education. Being nationally certified may offer a competitive advantage in the marketplace over non-certified practitioners with employers and consumers. Today more than 88,000 practitioners are nationally certified through NCBTMB.

Certification by the NCBTMB is one of the criteria accepted by AMTA for professional membership. AMTA also requires members to take continuing education courses to continue to advance their training and improve their skills. When joining AMTA, members are committing to maintaining standards of professionalism. To make continuing education accessible, AMTA offers courses online and in mtj, as well as more than 25 classes at the annual convention; AMTA chapters also offer continuing education classes to members.

If you're nationally certified, it's important to maintain your certification. You must recertify every four years and complete a set amount of continuing education credits. To inquire about recertification or if you're interested in becoming nationally certified, contact the NCBTMB at **www.ncbtmb.org** or 800-296-0664. And don't forget to take advantage of the many options AMTA offers its members to meet their continuing education requirements. All of these courses are approved by the NCBTMB.

Protecting Practitioners and the Public Through Licensure

AMTA is actively working toward a goal of fair and consistent licensure in all 50 states and portability of the credential across state lines. Portability means that the education and training credentials of a licensed massage practitioner would be accepted when a practitioner moves to or practices in another state. According to our survey, 88 percent of members said all massage therapists should be licensed, and 92 percent said all states should have identical or similar licensing laws.

To meet this goal, AMTA has a centralized government relations program that supports and counsels chapters on how to advocate at the state level for fair and consistent licensure laws. The chapters are given the tools they need to lobby for licensure, promote basic "must-have" language for bills, generate grassroots campaigns and navigate the often-complicated legislation process.

Today, 38 states and the District of Columbia have some form of massage therapy licensure in place. At press time, 23 bills pertaining to massage therapy regulation were pending in 16 states. Even though great strides have been made in the regulation of massage, there is still work to be done. There are still 12 states with no regulation. There is also little consistency among many of the states that do regulate massage therapy.

You can get involved in legislative efforts by volunteering for your state's massage therapy legislative coalition. Massage therapists are the individuals most suited to determine what is best for the profession and the clients they serve.

Visit the government relations section of the AMTA website at **www.amtamassage.org/government/home.html** for legislative updates from across the country, or contact Joe Roth, government relations program manager, toll-free at 877-905-2700, ext. 155, or by e-mail to **jroth@amtamassage.org.**

Cultivating Research to Inform the Practice

Research brings many advantages to the massage therapy field. It can help increase the profession's credibility, identify the most effective massage modalities, improve the way massage is taught in schools and ensure a standard of quality across the profession. A growing body of credible research in massage therapy is helping to redefine and inform the practice, bringing AMTA closer to its objective that the practice of massage therapy will be evidence-based.

The Massage Therapy Foundation—whose mission is to advance the knowledge and practice of massage therapy by supporting scientific research, education and community service—is working to make the profession more evidence-informed. Founded and supported by the profession, including members of AMTA, the foundation is funding pilot research that has the potential to be published in respected medical journals and can optimize the design of larger-scale studies. The foundation is working to improve research literacy through contests that encourage students and practitioners to identify interesting areas of study and develop their own case reports.

The foundation also funds community service projects that have a research component. One recent project brought therapeutic massage to severely burned adolescents who were having trouble readjusting to school following their injury. The volunteer therapists recorded the size and density of the children's scar tissue before and after massage to determine whether there was a therapeutic benefit. One day, these preliminary data could form the basis of a large-scale study published in a mainstream medical journal.

There are many ways you can get involved in this important area. Through case reports, both practitioners and students can take part in promoting the effectiveness of massage. If you work with students, encourage them to take part in this exciting opportunity. Funding for the research is equally important. Not everyone can participate in research but they can make a donation to fund it. To learn more about contributing, contact the foundation at 847-869-5019 or donate online at **www.massagetherapyfoundation.org**.

AMTA is committed to working toward its goals in each of the cornerstones of the profession through actions that support the advancement of massage therapy. To ensure future success, we are working collaboratively with others in the profession to reach these goals. It's important that everyone in the profession is involved in shaping our future. All of us working together for a common goal can achieve great things.

To ensure future success, we work collaboratively with others in the profession to reach our goals in each of the cornerstones. It's important for everyone in the profession to be involved in shaping our future. All of us working together for a common goal can achieve great things.

How are you helping to shape the future of the profession?

As an AMTA member, you are a critical partner in helping shape the future of massage therapy. **Ask yourself the following questions and then take steps to become part of the future success of the profession.**

- Do you practice in a state that requires all massage therapists to be licensed? If not, are you willing to become involved in local regulatory or legislative activities?
- When hiring massage therapists, do you look for someone who has graduated from an accredited school?
- If you are affiliated with a massage therapy school or program, is it accredited? If not, encourage accreditation!
- Do you attend conferences like AMTA's National Convention to learn the latest about your profession and improve your skills through continuing education?
- Have you participated in any massage therapy research? Is there a particular topic of interest for which you could write a case study?
- Have you made a donation to fund massage therapy research?
- Do you keep up with your continuing education requirements for AMTA professional membership and/or national certification?
- Do you personally hold yourself to the highest standards of quality and ethical behavior?

BLS Sees Growth for Massage

By JoAnn Milivojevic

In these challenging economic times, you'll be pleased to know that your choice to become a massage therapist was a good one. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), massage therapy is among the fastest growing occupations in the country. Between 2006 and 2016, the BLS anticipates that the massage industry will grow by at least 20 percent. The picture is particularly good for those seeking part-time employment.

There may be ups and downs from year to year, but the industry is set for growth over the long term. Continued increase in consumer use of massage and integration of massage therapy into health care will be essential to this growth.

The BLS is the principal fact-finding agency for the federal government. They gather, analyze and distribute employment data about a wide variety of jobs. Their recently released *U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2008-09 Occupational Outlook Handbook* included data on the massage industry and analysis of its work environment.

Getting Career-Smart

Knowing more about how and why the occupation operates the way it does can help you better manage your career. According to the BLS, more than half of massage therapists are self-employed and those with a large client base are the highest earners in the industry.

But what does it take to be successfully self-employed? The handbook points out several key entrepreneurial assets. Developing a loyal clientele is crucial to success because those who seek a massage therapist tend to make regular visits. Good interpersonal skills, careful assessments, excellent technique and business skills are also needed to be successful. And, it takes time and experience to build a solid client base.

Many people get to self-employment by working for others first. A great way to learn how to run your own business is by seeing how others manage all the details. There's accounting, taxes, marketing and client records to maintain, not to mention the cost of physical supplies such as tables, massage oils, sheets and towels. Self-employed and independent contractors also cover their own benefits such as insurance, vacation and retirement.

Diverse Choices

You have a wide variety of choices when it comes to employment—salons and spas, the offices of physicians and chiropractors, fitness and recreational sports centers or hotels. While massage therapists can find jobs throughout the country, employment is concentrated in metropolitan areas and resort and destination locales.

Focus your continuing education on niches that attract you. For example, relaxation and rejuvenation techniques are perfect for spa-type businesses, while rehabilitation and medical massage require different skills. You could check out your local chamber of commerce to find businesses that might be interested in an employee-friendly chair massage program. Diversify your options by building relationships with those in related occupations such as athletic trainers, physical therapists and other healers.

A great place to discover more about potential career opportunities is through your professional association. It can help increase your job prospects and career success through networking, educational opportunities, community outreach and more. Visit AMTA's website at **www.amtamassage.org** to check out all the resources available to help you achieve professional success.

For the complete BLS report, go to **www.bls.gov/oco/ocos295.htm.**

Companies Not Connected to AMTA

You may have been contacted by someone claiming they got your name from AMTA or that they have a relationship with AMTA. We want you to know this usually isn't true. Currently, AMTA works only with its liability insurance carrier, HPSO, to provide optional plan information to members, and with Bank of America to offer their products. If AMTA accepts a business relationship with a company, we will notify members.

The companies CitySearch and ClickSmart have contacted members and admitted using *AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist®* national locator service to create a call list. This violates a posted legal notice on the AMTA website. Both promised to stop the practice many months ago, but they haven't always met this commitment. From time to time, other companies also falsely claim to be working with AMTA.

AMTA doesn't approve these practices and doesn't give away your e-mail address. So, if someone calls or e-mails you and says they got your name or information from AMTA, you can be sure they have no connection with your association. Please tell them you know they have no agreement with your association and you want them to stop contacting you and other members.

You can be sure AMTA will always work to stop companies from misusing the AMTA name and violating the privacy of our members, whenever we find out this is happening.

If you're contacted by a company that you feel misrepresents a relationship with AMTA, please contact Ron Precht in the National Office by e-mail to **rprecht@amtamassage.org**, or toll-free 877-905-2700, ext. 149.

MASSAGE THERAPY FOUNDATION

FOUNDATION NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2007 PRACTITIONER CASE REPORT CONTEST WINNERS

Gold Award: Jennifer Zalta, Jackson, Wyoming, "Orthopedic Massage Protocol for Post-ACL Reconstruction Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome."

Silver Award: Kim LeMoon, Highland Park, New Jersey, "Clinical Reasoning in Massage Therapy."

Bronze Award: Karen Varney, Annapolis, Maryland, "The Role of Massage Therapy and Bodywork in the Treatment of a Client Diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder."

Honorable Mention: Krista Dicks, Ontario, Canada, "Massage Therapy Techniques as Pain Management for Erythromelalgia."

Honorable Mention: Leslie Jensen, Seattle, Washington, "The Use of Lymphatic Facilitation with Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Reconstruction Rehabilitation."

Honorable Mention: Erika Larson, Lilburn, Georgia, "Massage as Conservative Treatment for Chronic Exertional Compartment Syndrome."

Honorable Mention: Dylan Lott, Evanston, Illinois, "The Effectiveness of Massage Therapy on Postpartum Non-discogenic Sciatica."

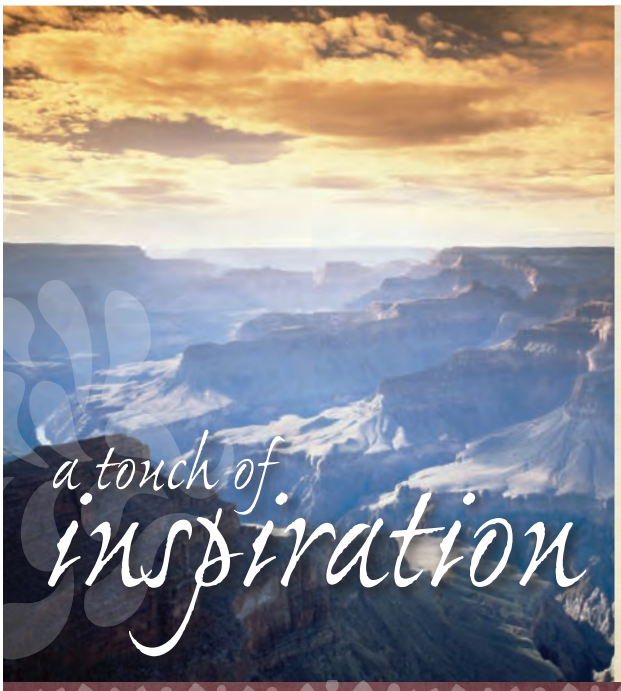
To view the full abstracts of these award-winning reports, please visit **www.massagetherapyfoundation.org/PractitionerContest.html.**

RESEARCH NEWS

Coming this summer—the *International Journal of Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork: Research, Education, & Practice (IJTMB). IJTMB* is the first peer-reviewed scientific journal for the therapeutic massage and bodywork profession, and it will be available free of charge. Look for more information at **www.massagetherapyfoundation.org.**

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE

The Massage Therapy Foundation is a 501(c)3 public charity with a mission to advance the knowledge and practice of massage by supporting scientific research, education and community service. Your donation will help to promote collaborative research, deepen the understanding of massage therapy and bring massage to people in need. To make a donation online, please visit **www.massagetherapyfoundation.org.**



featuring

Keynote Speaker Judith Aston, a pioneer in the field of movement education and bodywork

Add some inspiration to your career by attending the largest national convention and trade show for massage therapists!

- Earn up to 19 continuing education hours in a variety of education tracks
- Earn 16 additional hours at the Pre-Convention Workshop taught by James Waslaski
- Enjoy 85% more time shopping for your practice – 25 total exhibit hours, 14 hours free of competing activities

Register by August 1 to get the benefit of your early member registration rate – an $89 savings! Visit www.amtamassage.org to register, or call toll-free 1-877-905-2700, ext. 143, for more information.

AMTA 2008 National Convention

Phoenix, Arizona | September 17-20

CALENDAR **2008**

June 7
AMTA Board of Directors Meeting
Louisville, Kentucky
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 157
gmitchell@amtamassage.org

July 10–13
Chapter Volunteer Orientation Program
Evanston, Illinois
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 115
mlove@amtamassage.org

September 15–16
AMTA Board of Directors Meeting
Phoenix, Arizona
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 157
gmitchell@amtamassage.org

September 17–20
AMTA National Convention
Phoenix, Arizona
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 143
meetings@amtamassage.org

October 19–25
National Massage Therapy Awareness Week®
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 133
kkarapetian@amtamassage.org

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UPCOMING DEADLINES
June 14, 2008—Sep/Oct 2008
August 14, 2008—Nov/Dec 2008

Hands On welcomes contributions from AMTA members. All submissions must include contact information, and may be edited for space and clarity. *Hands On* does not accept advertisements. Address all correspondence to:
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Join In

Massage therapy can be a solitary business, so enjoy one of the unique benefits you get from being an AMTA member—your connection to other members in your community, chapter and nationally. One of the best ways to get involved and meet other people is to volunteer. By volunteering you'll directly affect the future of your profession, while having fun and learning about yourself.

A great way to find volunteer opportunities is through AMTA's Volunteer Connections website at **www.amtamassage.org/volunteer_connections.html.** It's been completely revamped, making it easier than ever to find volunteers, events and ongoing volunteer positions. Right now there are many opportunities posted, ranging from events across the United States to open national committee positions.

Anyone can submit notices for new events or positions, but volunteering is a member benefit. When you select an opportunity, you'll need to log in with your member ID number and password (last name).

If you have questions or comments about Volunteer Connections, please contact Melissa Spani, AMTA governance and volunteer development assistant, toll-free at 877-905-2700, ext. 189, or by e-mail to **mspani@amtamassage.org**.

AMTA is successful because of the valuable contributions of its volunteers. Take advantage of this member benefit and connect with your community!

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